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| Mental Health Policy - Pupils and Students School  |

**Policy application: - Education and Life Skills – School**

**Job title of the author: - Director of Education**

**Responsibilities for implementation: - Director of Education**

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| **Approved by the David Lewis Senior Management Team:** | September 2022 |
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| **Department issuing the document:** | Education |

**1. Policy statement**

At David Lewis School, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils, young people, parents, carers’, staff and other stakeholders.

**2. Scope**

This policy is intended to:

* Provide guidance to staff on our school approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the school.
* Inform pupils, young people and parents about the support that they can expect from the school in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing.

**3. Policy aims**

* Promote positive mental health and wellbeing across education
* Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion
* Foster a positive atmosphere, where pupils and students feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly
* Celebrate all of the ways all achieve at our school, both inside and outside the classroom
* Allow pupils and young people to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting pupil voice
* Give pupils and young people the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others
* Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest
* Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
* Provide support to staff working with pupils and young people with mental health issues
* Provide support and access to resources to pupils and students experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

**4. Legal basis**

This policy was written with regard to:

[The Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

[The Data Protection Act 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted)

Articles 3 and 23 of the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child)

**5. Roles and responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the school and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil or young person’s mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Student Support Coordinators in the school.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing in school. These members of staff include:

Head of School - Kate Tierney

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL) – Raisa Tryon, Kate Tierney & Zoe Wright

Mental Health Lead – Jo Hall

**6. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis**

* Speak immediately to one of the above staff members
* Complete a concern (School Pod) and report to the designated safeguarding lead

**7. Warning signs**

All staff will be on the lookout for signs that a pupil's or young person’s mental health is deteriorating. Some warning signs include:

* Changes in mood or energy level
* Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
* Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
* Changes in level of personal hygiene
* Social isolation
* Poor attendance or punctuality
* Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
* Abuse of drugs or alcohol
* Weight loss or gain
* Secretive behaviour
* Covering parts of the body that they wouldn’t have previously
* Refusing to participate in P.E. or being secretive when changing clothes
* Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
* Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted
* Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

**8. Managing disclosures**

If a pupil or young person makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the pupil and young people’s emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the school’s safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. All disclosures are recorded.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff will include:

* The full name of the member of staff who is making the record
* The full name of the pupil/young person (s) involved
* The date, time and location of the disclosure
* The context in which the disclosure was made
* Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff

**9. Confidentiality**

Staff should not promise a pupil or young person that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

* Being the sole person responsible for a pupil’s or young person’s mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff’s own mental health and wellbeing
* The support put in place for the pupil or young person will be dependent on the member of staff being at school
* Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the pupil in question

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a pupil or young person with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the pupil or young person and explain:

* Who they will share the information with
* What information they will share
* Why they need to share that information

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the pupil or young person to share their information, but the safety of the pupil/young person comes first.

Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Safeguarding policy will be followed.

**9.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures**

1. Pupil/young person makes a disclosure
2. Member of staff offers support
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with designated safeguarding lead
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the pupil/young person’s consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the pupil/young person who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff
6. The designated safeguarding lead will inform the parent/carer (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis

**10. Supporting pupils**

**10.1 Baseline support for all pupils**

As part of the school’s commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils, the school offers support to all pupils by:

* Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time, PHSE and mental health awareness weeks
* Signposting all pupils to sources of online support on the school website
* Having open discussions about mental health during lessons
* Providing pupils and young people feedback on any elements of the school that is negatively impacting on their mental health
* Monitoring all pupils’ and young person’s mental health through assessment
* Appointing a senior mental health lead with a strategic overview of the whole school approach to mental health & wellbeing
* Offering pastoral support through all other team members
* Making classrooms a safe space to discuss mental health & wellbeing through interventions class and individualised interventions,

**10.2 Assessing what further support is needed**

If a pupil or young person is identified with a mental health need, the student support coordinator will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to making an assessment and providing tailored support, further to the provision of the baseline support as detailed in section 10.1. The school will offer support in cycles of:

Assessing what the pupil’s mental health needs are

Creating a plan to provide support

Taking the actions set out in the plan

Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

**10.3 Internal mental health interventions**

Where appropriate, a pupil or young person will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at our school includes:

* Changes to timetables
* Nurture groups or 1:1 meetings
* Time out
* Referred to counselling

Individualsed approaches are the most effective and will form the basis of each pupils or young person’s support.

**10.4 Making external referrals**

If a pupil’s or young person’s needs cannot be met by the internal offer the school provides, the school will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

This could be to:

GP or pediatrician

CAMHS

Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/), [Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk/donate/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8O-VBhCpARIsACMvVLP7L3BCox1DaNvFhwHTB-2U8-08d90-tUtvZcN9Qba8kMvdwb7KY1EaAv3AEALw_wcB), [Young Minds](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/), [Kooth](https://www.kooth.com/))

Local counselling services

**11. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers**

We will work with parents and carers to support pupils and young people’s mental health by:

* Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support
* Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child
* Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child
* Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing on our school website, including the mental health and wellbeing policy
* Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child
* Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
* Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in PSHE, and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child or young person, we will endeavor to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the school will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the pupil’s confidential record.

**12. Supporting peers**

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging. Pupils or young people may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all pupils and young people impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

* Strategies they can use to support their friends
* Things they should avoid doing/saying
* Warning signs to look out for
* Signposting to sources of external support

**13. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness**

**13.1 Mental health is taught in PSHE**

We will follow the [PSHE Association Guidance teaching mental health and emotional wellbeing](https://pshe-association.org.uk/mental-health-guidance).

Pupils and young people will be taught to:

* Develop healthy coping strategies
* Challenge misconceptions around mental health
* Understand their own emotional state
* Keep themselves safe

For more information, see our PSHE curriculum.

**13.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health**

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

* Discussing mental health with pupils and young people in order to break down stigma
* Encouraging pupils and young people to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating. All staff supporting pupils and young people will receive training to support them to deal with these ving

**14. Training**

All staff will be offered training so they:

* Have a good understanding of what pupils and young people mental health needs are
* Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health
* Know a clear process to follow if they identify a pupil or young person in need of help

**15. Support for staff**

We recognise that supporting a pupil or young person experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this we will:

* Ensure staff are appropriately equipped by providing appropriate training
* Treat mental health concerns seriously
* Offer staff supervisions sessions
* Support staff experiencing mental health themselves
* Create a pleasant and supportive work environment

**16. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the leadership team bi-annually. (May be replaced by Trauma & Mental Health Policy in 2025)